Supporting Healthy Coparenting and Intimate Relationships in Fatherhood Programs

May 23, 2022
Webinar Overview

- Coparenting and Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education for Dads (CHaRMED) Study Overview
- CHaRMED study findings
- Moderated Discussion
- Audience Q&A
Presenters

Don Mansfield
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Presenters

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Andrea Vazzano
Child Trends

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CHaRMED Background and Overview
Study Objectives

• Better understand the approaches that fatherhood programs use to support fathers’ healthy coparenting and intimate relationships
• Explore fathers’ perceptions of and needs around relationship programming
• Examine whether and how programs respond to those needs
Study Methods

- Conducted a qualitative study with nine fatherhood programs, which consisted of phone interviews with:

  - Staff (24)
  - Fathers (36)
  - Coparents (6)
Study Sample – Programs (9)

Located in **four regions across the United States**, including Midwest (3), South (3), West (2) and Mid-Atlantic and Northeast (1)

Served fathers with a **variety of racial and ethnic identities** including serving a majority who identified as Black (3), White (3), Hispanic or Latinx (2), and American Indian or Alaska Native (1)

5 programs operated in **urban settings**, 2 operated in **rural settings**, and 2 operated in both urban and rural settings

6 programs **received funding** through OFA Responsible Fatherhood grants

7 programs **engaged coparents or spouses** in some way
Study Sample – Fathers (36)

The majority of fathers were either married or currently in an intimate relationship (58%) at the time of the interview.

Most fathers reported having 1-2 minor children (63%); Nearly one quarter of fathers reported having 3-4 children (23%).

Over half of the fathers reported coparenting minor children with one mother (56%); over a third reported coparenting minor children with two or more mothers (36%).

One third of fathers reported that all of their children lived with them all or most of the time (34%) while another third were living apart from all of their children (34%).
Study Findings
Key Findings

Fatherhood programs support healthy relationships through multiple services and strategies

Fathers engage in healthy relationship content once they feel connected to the program

Safe group spaces invite discussions around healthy relationships
Key Findings

Staff and participants view healthy relationship content as relevant and useful for fathers’ coparenting relationships.

Meaningful engagement of coparents in relationship programming is seen as beneficial, but with important tradeoffs and logistical challenges.

Fathers see access to children as a key challenge in their lives, which is complicated by challenging coparenting relationships and legal and social systems.
Considerations for Fatherhood Programs

- Focus on relationship skills that are applicable across different types of relationships
- Build comfort and camaraderie among fathers and staff before discussing healthy relationships
- Consider models of coparent engagement that protect the fathers-only space
- Provide supports for fathers navigating contentious coparenting relationships and systemic challenges
Voices from the Field: A Moderated Discussion
Wrap-up

• CHaRMED Dissemination Products
• Acknowledgements
Report Released in December 2021

Coparenting and Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education for Dads (CHaRMED):
Results from a Qualitative Study of Staff and Participant Experiences in Nine Fatherhood Programs

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October 2021

OPRE Report 2021-196
Additional CHaRMED Products

- A brief of lessons learned from COVID-19 (Feb 2022)
- A short article highlighting study findings relevant for child welfare and other social service agencies (Jun 2022)
- A collection of three resources for fatherhood programs looking to better support fathers' relationships (Aug 2022)
- A brief providing considerations and practice-based strategies for fatherhood programs serving AIAN fathers (Aug 2022)
- A brief on stigma and discrimination, with practice-based resources (Aug 2022)
The CHaRMED team would like to thank everyone who has provided input on today's webinar and throughout the CHaRMED study!
Thank You!

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